

**July 26, 1994**

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**Introduction:**

In addition to the required data submission (the Summary Submission Files and Detailed Submission Files) States have the option of submitting footnotes. These footnotes allow States to provide additional information they deem vital to the interpretation of their data submission. Some examples of information the state may wish to convey are:

- General characteristics of the state's adoption and foster care system.
- Characteristics of the population; whether certain types of placements are included.
- State definitions that vary from the federal AFCARS definition.
- Explanations for data counts such as:
  - ▶ the number of deaths in foster care.
  - ▶ the number of children with disabilities.
  - ▶ the number of children in types of institutional settings.

Initially, States are encouraged (but not required) to send explanatory footnotes to aid in the interpretation of their data and to insure the validity of state to state comparisons.

In any tables published by ACF the appropriate footnotes will be included. ACF also intends to include the footnotes in any distribution of the data set and caution the users that the data must be interpreted in light of the footnotes. However, States should be aware that footnotes that compromise the confidentiality standards of the *National Center for Health Statistics Staff Manual on Confidentiality* will not be included.

**Footnote Record Transmission and Layout:**

The explanatory footnotes will be transmitted as an ASCII file with the following stipulations:

- 1) The footnote file must be concatenated to the end of the required AFCARS data submission.
- 2) The file may contain records for the following categories:
  - ▶ General comments on adoption.
  - ▶ General comments on foster care.
  - ▶ Specific comments on the adoption detailed data elements.

- ▶ Specific comments on the foster care detailed data elements.

States may submit multiple footnotes in each category (i.e. States may want to include multiple footnotes explaining the reasons for discharge from foster care). States are not required to submit footnotes.

3) Each record in the file will consist of four parts:

- i) A two character header:
  - ▶ Each record will begin with two percent signs "% %"
- ii) A nine character identifier:
  - ▶ Character 1-2: State two digit FIPS code.
  - ▶ Character 3-6: Report period ending date in the format: yymm
  - ▶ Character 7: "A" for Adoption footnotes.  
"F" for Foster Care footnotes.
  - ▶ Character 8-9: The two digit data element number reference to the detailed submission file. ("00" is designated for general comments)

Examples:

"449503A00" indicates that:

- the record is from Rhode Island.
- the reporting period ends in March 1995.
- text consists of general comments about adoption.

"449503F08" indicates that:

- the record is from Rhode Island.
- the reporting period ends in March 1995.
- the text refers to the foster care data element: Race.

- iii) The text of the footnote:
  - ▶ The body of the footnote may not exceed 242 characters.
- iv) An end of record marker:
  - ▶ Each record will end with a carriage return/line feed.

## Explanatory Footnote File Format

Each record in the footnote file should be formatted as follows:

Element Number	Data Element Description	Number of Characters	Allowable Values/ Format
1	Header	2	%%
2	State Code	2	Valid FIPS Code for State
3	Report Period Ending Date	4	YYMM
4	File Reference	1	"A" for Adoption "F" for Foster Care
5	Data Element Reference	2	00-37 for Adoption 00-65 for Foster Care
6	Footnote Text	242	Alphanumeric
Total Characters		253 <sup>1</sup>	

Here is an example of the footnote format for data element number 58: Reason for Discharge:

%% 44 9503 F58 Of the three  
deaths listed, two were due to  
pre-existing medical conditions,  
one due to an automobile accident.

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<sup>1</sup>This total does not include the carriage return/line feed.